

Family ReadinessNews

June 2009

GREETINGS TO THE FAMILIES OF MARINE BARRACKS WASHINGTON

As you read through this issue of the Family Readiness Newsletter, you will soon recognize that the major item of our focus is volunteerism. Each of us as a member of the Marine Corps Family knows the importance of service to others, we live that and practice it in our every day lives, the importance of our service to our country can not be minimized in any way.

In addition to our military service, we are also called upon to provide service to our neighbors and those who are in need of some support. In looking for these opportunities to serve, we need to look no further than our own community and fellow Marine families. There is much that we can do to support each other. As we expand our scope we see the needs of the local communities that we live in. The problems of homelessness, hunger, and poverty are evident in our daily lives even if they do not directly affect us. Furthermore we can look at our local schools where there is always a need for volunteer help and support. Opportunities to help those who are less fortunate are all around us.

The difficult economic times that we find ourselves in simply increase the need for volunteers who are willing and able to do something to help out in their neighborhood. People involved in volunteer activities will tell you how good their giving makes them feel. In addition to knowing that you have helped someone, volunteering gives you the opportunity to learn new skills,

or to practice and refine some skills that you already have. Volunteering also provides a great opportunity to meet and make some new friends who share the same goals and values as you do.

Over the past year Marines and family members from the barracks have given close to 1,000 hours of service to the community. Considering the demands of our mission, we can all be proud of that accomplishment. I would suggest that we should all look at that as a great foundation upon which to build a bigger and better program. Recognizing the importance of volunteerism the Marine Corps has invested in a new technology tool that will allow us to better promote volunteer opportunities, and keep track of the volunteer hours that are served. The new Volunteer Tracking Tool allows us to do that and I hope that you will read more about that in another article in this newsletter.

Once again, I offer my sincere thanks for what you have already done. I also ask that you consider other opportunities for service. I encourage you to volunteer your time with our Family Readiness Program or sign up to help out with one of our social events. Work through the Chaplain's Office on the SOME program which feeds the hun-



gry. Spend some time in the local military hospitals with our wounded warriors. Our Family Readiness Officer will be leading a coordinated effort to promote and grow volunteerism within the barracks community and I urge you to contact him with any thoughts, ideas or questions

that you might have.

Finally, and while volunteerism is a focal point of this newsletter, let me re-state that the vitality and stability of Marine Barracks Washington families ever remains a priority in this command. A wide and effective network of support and assistance exists for our families and can be tapped into through communication with the Marine Barracks Washington Family Readiness Officer (FRO). As always appropriate when assisting Marines and families communication and requests for support is kept in confidence and involves only those with a "need to know." Whether a uniformed service member, or family member, please know that assistance is available. I know I speak for Mr. Steve Norton in saying, "we are a phone call away-let us know how we can help."

Sincerely & *Semper Fidelis*,

Colonel Andrew Smith



LETTER FROM YOUR FAMILY READINESS OFFICER

Over the past year, more than 850 volunteer hours were given by Marines and family members to support the SOME Program that works to feed the hungry and shelter the homeless in Washington, DC. That is a tremendous accomplishment for our community, and the fact is that there are many more volunteer hours being given that we are not even aware of.

Within the Marine Barracks Washington area and at the Headquarters Marine Corps level we recognize how many hours of volunteer time are being given to our Marine Family Programs and to our communities and neighbors outside of the gates. Each person tends to donate their time to the cause or issues that are closest to their heart. Many of us work with youth sports programs, scouting programs, local school support programs, and church groups that help various causes. We have all offered our time to mentor students in our neighborhoods, spent time reading to children or even working with our wounded warriors in our military hospitals. While the primary purpose of us offering our time is not for the recognition, it is important to be recognized for the contributions that we are making as individuals and as a community.

A major part of the emphasis of our Family Readiness Program over the next months will be building a cadre of volunteers and offering the resources for

those volunteers to support a wide variety of programs. Additionally, we want to be able to accurately track the number of hours that are being volunteered. Using the new Volunteer Tracking Tool (VTT) (see additional story), we now have the technological tools to accomplish these goals.



We are looking to attract volunteers from all elements of the Barracks Community, Single Marines living in the BEQ, Married Marines, Spouses and even our teenaged children who are looking to learn about volunteerism. The new web site (VTT) will allow us to post opportunities on the web site, let volunteers choose the opportunity that they wish to take part in and track the volunteer hours of every individual who offers their time.

At the present time, we have a wonderful working relationship with the SOME program through the Chaplain's Office and we want to continue to strengthen those bonds. I am asking every member of our Barracks Family to think about the volunteer programs that you presently work with. Is there a way that we can

expand that program and reach out to other members of our community? Does your scouting program need mentors, or merit badge counselors? Can your local school use some volunteers to read to children in the classroom? Please contact me and let me know what you are doing right now and let us see if we can find a way to expand that program.

Please let me know about the organizations within the area that are looking for more volunteers. I would be happy to reach out to those volunteer based organizations to start cultivating a working relationship. Within the local neighborhood of 8th & I, we are making an effort to re-establish connections with the local Tyler Elementary School and the Charter School, both of which are within easy walking distance of the barracks.

Thanks for all that you do,

Steve





NEW VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

We are beginning the process of introducing some new volunteer tools, programs and opportunities for our Marine Barracks Community. These changes will benefit all of our Marines living in the Barracks as well as family members who want to volunteer their time to support the Barracks Community or the general population in the area.

For the first time we have access to an internet based program that will allow us to publish volunteer opportunities, allow volunteers to select the specific programs they want to support, and even keep track of the number of volunteer hours served. The Volunteer Tracking Tool (VTT) will log the number of hours volunteered. Volunteer activities would include time spent in training sessions such as L.I.N.K.S., PREP, supporting special events at the Barracks, working on the new Family Readiness Program and activities out in the general community such as Habitat for Humanity, Red Cross, United Way and S.O.M.E. Any individual who is presently involved in a volunteer activity should investigate the possibility of having information about their program published in the Volunteer Tracking Tool (VTT).

The first step is for people to register as a potential volunteer on the web site. Simply by registering, you will be able to log in to see what opportunities are available and what you might be interested in volunteering for. The act of registering does not commit you to any number of hours or a specific program. The choice of what you do and when is always up to you. Once you are registered, all of your volunteer hours will be recorded in the system, and the good news is since this is a web based program, the information goes with you when you move to a new duty station.

Please take a few minutes of your

time and follow these steps to register.

Go to: www.mccsvolunteering.org
On the left menu bar, select "Log In" and then click on "New Volunteer Sign Up"

Answer a few questions that relate to your interests, programs that you might like to support, your potential availability and the populations that you would want to serve.

Most important in the Tab marked, "My Geographic Area" select the button for "8th and I". That will allow you to see the opportunities posted for the barracks community.

Watch for further information coming out through our newsletter, the new Mass Communication Tool and other venues as we move forward.

For questions or support, please contact:

Steve Norton
Family Readiness Officer
202-433-4881
stephen.p.norton@usmc.mil

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

There are opportunities to volunteer some time in support of our Family Readiness Program. A few of these duties could easily be accomplished from the comfort of your home and not require any travel.

- How about offering to make a phone call or two to welcome new families to our Barracks Community. Share your experience and expertise, make our new arrivals feel welcome, comfortable, and at home. You might even find that a simple phone call will lead to a great new friendship.
- We are looking for a volunteer to assist in coordinating our new

Volunteer Program. Once you are trained on the use of the new VTT, this could be done on your home computer whenever you have some time to spare. This person would simply edit the information that is posted about new volunteer opportunities. Since the new VTT is a Web Based program, it can be accessed from any computer that has internet access.

- Local schools are interested in finding individuals who would like to serve as a mentor for students.

IMPORTANT NEW PROGRAM INFORMATION: UP TO \$6,000 FOR SPOUSE'S EDUCATION

DOD has just announced a program that is offering up to \$6,000 to military spouses who are interested in pursuing degree programs, licenses, or credentials leading to careers in high growth, high demand portable career fields.

NOTE: there are limitations on career fields that will be covered so spouses should call for further clarification. For example, a person studying for a degree in Philosophy might not be covered, whereas someone studying for a career in health care, teaching, or conservation could be covered.

The \$6,000 is a maximum allowance and there is no time limit for it to be used. The program will pay for training, tuition, licensing and credentialing fees. Additionally, fees could be paid for CPA exams, Bar exams, state certifications for teachers and health care professionals. Eligible schools have the ability to bill the DOD directly through electronic means.

Spouses of all active duty members are eligible. (Military spouses who are military members are not eligible)



Spouses should work with their School Academic Advisor, or call a Military OneSource Career/Education Consultant at 1-800-342-9647 for assistance.

For further information and a list of FAQ's go to one of the following websites, or call Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647.

<https://aiportal.acc.af.mil/mycaa>

www.militaryonesource.com

TRAINING SESSIONS

In conjunction with the Chaplain's Office we recently held a PREP (Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program) Session for people planning to marry or those who just wish to "Refresh" their communication and relationship skills. We were pleased to have 14 people attend this session.

We have now planned out dates for the next calendar year to offer this popular program at Marine Barracks Washington.

Our next session will be held on: **Wednesday, August 26, 2009 from 0900 to 1600**

Please contact RP1 Corbett (Chaplain's Office) 202-433-2521, or Steve Norton (FRO) at 202-433-4881 to register for this session.

LINKS training Session coming up on Sat Sept 12, 2009.

Lifestyle, Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills

Our next LINKS Training Session is scheduled for September (After Parade Season). This session is conducted by a number of experienced Military Spouses who will facilitate the program which focuses on spouses new to the Marine Corps community. It helps spouses adapt to the unique challenges military life pres-

ents by providing an orientation to the Marine Corps lifestyle, successfully surviving separations and discussing benefits and services available to Marine Corps Families. It also provides an opportunity to network with other Marine spouses. The course is eight hours in length.

Once again, we encourage Marines and their spouses to attend; this program is also helpful to couples who are planning to marry in the near future.

Reminder: Free child care is available for couples who wish to attend these sessions together. Please contact the FRO at least a week before the session so that we can line up child care for you.



A DISNEY WORLD REMINDER

Time is running out on this great offer from Disney World Resort. You only have until December 23, 2009 to take advantage of Disney's Armed Forces Salute.

Active and Retired Military personnel may obtain ONE Complimentary 5 day Park Hopper Ticket. Along with the one free ticket for the member, you may purchase up to five, 5-Day Disney's Armed Forces Salute Companion Tickets (good for one theme park per day) for just \$99.00 per ticket, tax not included.

Remember to reduce your vacation costs take a look at the web site for the military family resort (Shades of Green) located at Disney World Resort. www.shadesofgreen.org

All tickets Must be purchased and used before December 23, 2009.



FAMILY READINESS CONTACT INFORMATION

FAMILY READINESS OFFICER

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MARINE FAMILY TEAM BUILDING

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EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM

Ms. Linda Clark
703-614-7200

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Mr. Michael Flaherty
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LIFELONG LEARNING OFFICE

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